

Proceedings of General Assembly

Reports Of Some Important Standing Committees.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

Your Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries would respectfully report that there have been put into their hands the annual reports of the Boards of Directors of Union Theological Seminary, at Richmond, Va., of Columbia Theological Seminary, of the Divinity School of the Southwestern Presbyterian University, of the Theological Seminary of Kentucky and of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. These reports are full and encouraging, showing safe investments, that the health of professors and students, has, with few exceptions, been good, that the work has been prosecuted with vigor and fidelity and that the number of students enrolled is greater than that of last year. In connection with these facts, it is with some disappointment that we note that the number of young men going forth this year from these institutions into their life work is less than that of last year.

At Union Theological Seminary, the number of graduates is 15, and the attendance 72, an increase of 3 over last year. The students have continued and enlarged their mission work and the Seminary has in successful operation a course of instruction in Missions, Sabbath Schools and Young People's Work. Further, through the labors of professors and undergraduates, the claims of the Gospel Ministry have been presented to all the State and Denominational Institutions within the two Synods of Virginia and North Carolina. It is with gratitude we note that through the liberality of the Presbyterians of Richmond, Richmond Hall, at a cost of \$43,000, has been erected.

At Columbia Theological Seminary the enrollment is 27, a gain of 2 over last year, 11 of whom go forth to the work of the ministry. The Rev. Dr. Wm. E. Mellwain has been secured as financial agent, and in the spirit of enlarged enterprise, this institution "rejoices to believe it has entered upon a most active and successful era."

The Divinity School of the Southwestern Presbyterian University has 10 students, "the same as last year, exclusive of 3, who were only in special classes. Four are expecting to enter the ministry at the close of the present session." The Rev. Dr. J. W. Roseboro, having been elected to the Palmer Chair of Systematic Theology, has prosecuted successfully his work during the past year and the "Rev. R. E. Fulton has been advanced from Assistant Professor, to full Associate Professor of Ecclesiastical History."

At the Theological Seminary of Kentucky, the enrollment was 45 as against 46 of last year, with seven young men going out into their chosen work. In the Board of Directors changes have been made through the death and resignation of certain of its members and the election of others to take their places.

"The Rev. C. K. Crawford, D. D., Professor in the School of Old Testament Exegesis, has resigned his chair and his resignation has been accepted with regret. Otherwise, the faculty remains the same as last year. A dormitory, the last of the structures contemplated in the original design of the Seminary, is now in process of erection." It is the munificent gift of Mr. James Ross Todd and Mrs. Louise Todd Hauge, in memory of their father and mother, Mr. James Todd and Mrs. Mary M. Todd.

The Austin Theological Seminary reports an enrollment of 17 students, a gain of 7 over last year, upon 3 of whom the degree of Bachelor of Divinity was recently conferred. "Several of these students have taken courses in the University of Texas and the professors have taught weekly Bible classes among the University students. The endowment of the Allen Johnson Chair of English Bible and Practical Theology has been about completed, and the work of the Seminary has gone on without interruption under the efficient direction of five professors. The Rev. Dr. R. E. Vinson has been unanimously elected by the Board of Directors to the office of President of the Seminary.

It is gratifying to record that most of these institutions have provided special courses of lectures, delivered by distinguished speakers from our own land and from abroad, that in all of them the spirit of progress is manifest and that they display undiminished fidelity to and commendable zeal for the faith delivered once for all unto the Saints.

We recommend:

1. That the Assembly hereby express its gratitude to God for the manifest tokens of his favor toward these institutions during the past year.

2. That candidates for the ministry, wishing

to avail themselves of the benefits of these institutions be encouraged, and, whenever practical, required to prepare themselves for their Theological Studies by taking thorough collegiate courses.

3. That these Schools of the Prophets be, and hereby are, commended to our candidates for the ministry as being eminently qualified to prepare them for the duties of that holy office.

4. That these institutions be and hereby are heartily commended to all our people, for their support by their patronage, their prayers and their liberality.

Respectively submitted.

JOSEPH H. LUMPKIN Chairman.

THE NARRATIVE.

Your Committee on the Narrative on the State of Religion begs leave to make the following report.

Narratives from 84 Presbyteries have been placed in our hands, together with an overture from Abingdon Presbytery, asking "the Assembly to interpret definitely question No. 10 in the narrative of the session."

1. In answer to this overture the Assembly makes the following reply: Question ten (10) of the narrative of the session, (What evangelistic work is done by your church outside its bounds?) has reference to evangelistic work by the church in territory immediately touching the bounds of the congregation e. g., a mission Sunday school.

II. The attention of the Presbyteries is called to this direction of the last Assembly (see page 4) "Narratives of Presbytery should embrace topics that confirm to the narratives of sessions with a prefatory statement which shows how many churches there are in the Presbytery and how many sent written narratives to the meeting when the Presbyterial narrative was prepared and with a final topic on the supply of its churches with the ministry of the word."

III. From the narratives sent up to this Assembly the following is a brief summary:

1. With few exceptions the attendance upon the Sabbath morning services of the churches is good. Few of the narratives speak of the mid-week prayer meeting or the Sabbath evening service, but when reference is made to these it is to note small congregations in attendance. In very few instances is there reference to attendance of the children at public worship.

2. We would stress the cry of every one of these 84 narratives that family worship is woefully neglected. While the narratives are too indefinite to approximate the proportion of the families within our churches where the altar burns, we are persuaded that 20 per cent is too high an estimate. "Sadly neglected" is the lamentable cry from every quarter of our bounds. While here and there even three fourths of the families of a church keep the altar burning, they are the rare exceptions, while on the other hand, fifteen of our Presbyteries sent up the report that there are churches within their bounds in which there is not even one family observing family worship and one Presbytery reports nine such churches.

The neglect of family worship is a blight upon our whole church. Earnest effort by the Session and pastors should be prayerfully made to correct this evil and ceaseless prayer be made to the Great Head of the Church to pour out His Spirit that there may be a revival of true and undefiled religion in His Body on earth. Attention is here directed to the sermon on family religion by the retiring moderator of this Assembly, Rev. W. W. Moore, D. D., which can be had of our Publication Committee in Richmond, Va., in pamphlet form. We should be glad to see a copy of this sermon in all our homes and read by every parent.

3. "Outwardly well observed" is the stereotyped answer on the topics of the observance of the Lord's day by members. We know that the tendency of the day is towards a lax observance of the Sabbath, and this laxness finds expression among our church members in social visiting, travel, getting the mail, reading the secular newspapers, neglect of private worship in the home, etc. We are persuaded that the observance of the Lord's day after the scriptural manner and as practiced by our fathers, is to a "great extent, a thing of the past."

4 and 5. To an alarming extent many of the Presbyteries report the training in the home of the children and youth in the scriptures and Catechisms of the church is "sadly neglected." These narratives show a widespread disposition to shift this responsibility to the Sabbath school; that the Sabbath school is

fast becoming, not an auxiliary to the home, but, to a great extent, superseding it. We fear that in many cases, religious training is relegated entirely to the Sabbath school teacher.

The Sabbath schools are generally reported to be well attended and generally in good condition. The work appears to be systematic, faithful and aggressive. More attention is being given to material equipment, training of teachers and methods of Bible study. "But the Sabbath school can be neither god-mother nor step-mother to the child who has professing parents at home."

6. The narratives present an encouraging report as to the generosity of our people in giving of their substance to God in the support of the Gospel.

The general tenor of the reports seems to sound a new note. Our people are being moved more and more to see the great duty and privilege, not only of supporting the gospel in their own individual churches, but of carrying it to the needy and destitute of every land. While our people are growing in the grace of giving, it is questioned, in some cases, if the increase is in proportion to the increase of their income.

7. Nearly all of the narratives show that most of the pastors have been fully paid their salaries, though not always promptly. Few report an increase of salaries. In view of the increased cost of living, the larger income of our people, and, in so large a number of cases, of the too meager salaries now paid the pastors, our churches are urged to a more faithful obedience of the divine command, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate with him that teacheth in all good things."

8. In a large majority of our churches there is evidence of the Holy Spirit's power and presence in steady growth in grace and in deepening interest in things spiritual. A limited number report a great awakening and large accessions through professions of faith. While we rejoice in the increased activity in church work, we would admonish all our people to always bear in mind that mere activity is not fruit-bearing.

9. "Worldly conformity does not prevail," or "Worldly conformity does not prevail to a great extent," characterizes the replies of most of the narratives. These replies contradict answers to questions of most of the narratives, showing that the minds of many are evidently in a state of uncertainty as to what constitutes "worldly conformity." One narrative freely admits worldly conformity, but notes that it does not "prevail." There seems to be not general conformity to a well-defined worldliness. One narrative replies: "As to worldly conformity, as a Presbytery, looking the question straight in the face from a scriptural view point, we are compelled to reply that the lines of demarcation between the Church and the world are greatly obscured in various ways, depending upon varying views and customs of different communities." This answer we believe truly states the fact. The lax observance of the Sabbath is a clear evidence of the prevalence of worldly conformity.

10. A larger proportion of the Presbyteries report a goodly number of churches engaged in evangelistic work outside of their bounds. The replies to this question, however, show that all do not understand the question alike. One class regards the personal efforts of pastor and people to foster and maintain a mission church in their community as evangelistic work outside of their bounds, while another class regards that duty fulfilled in the support of a foreign missionary. In the light of the definition given above (II), we rejoice to know that there is a goodly number of churches availing themselves of the opportunities to enter the open doors around them. On the other hand, we are pained to know that so many churches are blind to these opportunities. Our churches are evangelical, but our people, in many cases, are not evangelistic.

11. Nearly all of the Presbyteries report that efforts are being made to secure recruits to the Gospel Ministry, either by special sermons or personal efforts by pastors, or by the personal efforts of the other officers of the churches.

12. For the reason that most of the Presbyteries fail to state the number of churches, enrolled and reporting and so large a number returning no answer to the inquiry, "To what extent are your churches supplied with the ministry of the Word?" your committee does not attempt to treat this topic, except to urge ceaseless prayer to God to thrust forth more laborers into His vineyard. Upon the whole, there is evidence of a slow, but positive